

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for configuring an indicating configuration to be associated with a container wherein each indicating configuration includes an indicator and data stored thereon related to an order associated with the container and at least a sub-set of indicating configurations include an enhanced memory device and enhanced data stored thereon, an enhanced device being a device that cooperates with a data collector to gather information therefrom, at least one descriptor associated with each order that can be used to identify the indicating configuration and the data to be stored via the indicating configuration, the apparatus comprising:

a reader for reading each descriptor;

a writer for writing data to enhanced devices; and

a processor linked to the reader for receiving each descriptor and using the descriptor to identify when enhanced data is associated with an order, the processor, when enhanced data is associated with an order, causing the writer to write enhanced data to an enhanced device and, when enhanced data is not associated with an order, causing another indicating function to be performed.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 further including a database correlating descriptors with associated data to be written to enhanced devices, the processor linked to the database and, when a descriptor is received, identifying by accessing the database and determining if enhanced data corresponds to the specific descriptor.

3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the database includes an order queue including a plurality of orders, each order including a descriptor, the reader including a queue pointer that sequentially identifies each of the descriptors in the queue and provides the descriptors to the processor.

4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein each container is a medication container, each order is a medication prescription for a particular medication user and the data is data related to the medication to be stored in the container.

5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the data is also a function of a medication user corresponding to the order.

6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least a sub-set of the descriptors indicate that no data should be written to an enhanced device and wherein the another function includes disabling the writer when no data is to be written to an enhanced device.

7. The apparatus of claim 1 further including a container source controlled by the processor and providing containers having enhanced devices attached thereto.

8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein at least a sub-set of the descriptors indicate that no data should be written to an enhanced device and wherein the another function includes disabling the writer when no data is to be written to an enhanced device.

9. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the container source includes an enhanced container source and a non-enhanced container source for providing enhanced and non-enhanced containers, respectively, and wherein, when a descriptor indicates that no data is to be written to an enhanced device, the another function includes causing the non-enhanced source to provide a non-enhanced container.

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10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the enhanced container source includes an enhanced device source and a device attacher, the attacher receiving non-enhanced containers and, when an enhanced container is required, attaching an enhanced device to a container to provide the enhanced container.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the processor also uses the descriptor to identify human readable indicia related to the order and the apparatus further includes an indicia printer for printing the indicia for inclusion on the container.

12. The apparatus of claim 11 further including a label source for providing labels and wherein the printer prints the indicia on the label.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 further including a label attacher for attaching the labels to the containers.

14. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the enhanced devices are attached to labels and wherein the attacher attaches by attaching the labels to the container.

15. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the processor also uses the descriptor to identify human readable indicia related to the order and the apparatus further includes an indicia printer for printing the indicia on the label.

16. The apparatus of claim 1 further including a label source controlled by the processor and providing labels having enhanced devices attached thereto for inclusion on the containers.

17. The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the another indicating function includes disabling the writer.

18. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the label source includes an enhanced label source and a non-enhanced label source for providing enhanced labels including enhanced devices and non-enhanced labels, respectively, and wherein, when a descriptor indicates that no data is to be written to an enhanced device, the processor causes the non-enhanced source to provide a non-enhanced label.

19. The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the enhanced label source includes an enhanced device source and a device attacher, the attacher receiving non-enhanced labels and, when an enhanced label is required, attaching an enhanced device to a label to provide the enhanced label.

20. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the processor also uses the descriptor to identify human readable indicia related to the product to be stored in the container and further including an indicia printer for providing the indicia on the label.

21. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the processor also uses the descriptor to identify human readable indicia to be included on the container wherein the indicia is related to the order, the apparatus further including a label source and an indicia printer linked to the processor, the processor sequencing the indicia printing and data writing such that indicia and data corresponding to the same descriptor are provided on the same container.

22. The apparatus of claim 21 wherein each label includes an indicia surface and an attached enhanced device and wherein the printer and writer print and write the indicia and data corresponding to a single descriptor to the surface and device, respectively, at the same time.

23. The apparatus of claim 21 wherein each of the writing and printing steps is a specifying step and each of the indicia and data are specifying information, a first of the specifying steps occurs before a second of the specifying

5 steps, each printing and writing cycle is a specifying cycle, for each descriptor, the first step occurs N specifying cycles prior to the second step and the processor sequences the second step specifying information to be specified N cycles after the first step specifying information is specified.

24. The apparatus of claim 23 wherein N is 1.

25. The apparatus of claim 1 further including a container source wherein the source provides containers with attached descriptors.

26. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the descriptor includes one of a bar code, a magnetic code, a Braille code and machine readable optical characters and the reader includes a matching one of a bar code reader, a magnetic code reader, a Braille code reader and a reader of the optical characters.

27. The apparatus of claim 25 further including a database that correlates each descriptor with associated data to be written to enhanced devices, the processor linked to the database and, when a descriptor is received, identifying by accessing the database and locating the descriptor and associated data.

28. The apparatus of claim 1 further including an enhanced device source that includes the writer and that is linked to the processor wherein, the source provides an enhanced device to an apparatus user for attachment to the container and after the processor identifies the data, the writer writes to the enhanced device.

5 29. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the container is a medication container, the data is medication data and the data includes at least a sub-set of a patient ID, the medication type, prescribed dose, recommended dose, a prescribing physician's identification, primary physician's identification and instructions regarding a health safety function.

30. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein descriptors that indicate enhanced data include the enhanced data and the processor identifies by reading the enhanced data.

31. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein each enhanced device is one of a RFID tag, an electronic memory, a magnetic tag, a multi-dimensional bar code and a dot matrix.

32. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the reader includes a hand held device that can be positioned in the vicinity of the descriptor and activated to read the descriptor.

33. The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the hand held device also comprises the writer that can be positioned in the vicinity of the enhanced device and activated to write to the enhanced device.

34. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the processor also uses the descriptor to identify human readable indicia to be included on the container wherein the indicia is related to the order, the apparatus further including an indicia printer linked to the processor, the another function including causing the indicia printer to print the human readable indicia for inclusion on the container.

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35. An apparatus for providing medication containers at least a sub-set of which include enhanced devices wherein each enhanced device includes data related to an order associated with the container, the apparatus comprising:

an enhanced container source providing containers including attached enhanced devices;

a non-enhanced container source;

a processor equipped to control the sources, the processor determining when an enhanced container should be used to store the product and, when an enhanced container should be used, providing the enhanced container for storage and providing the data to be stored on the enhanced device; and

a writer for receiving the enhanced container and writing the data to the enhanced device.

36. The apparatus of claim 35 further comprising a database including an order queue including a plurality of orders, each order indicating if a container should include an enhanced device, the processor linked to the database and, for each order, using the order information to determine when an enhanced container should be provided.

37. The apparatus of claim 35 also for providing human readable indicia on the containers, each indicia including data related to the product to be stored in the container, the apparatus further including an indicia provider for providing indicia to be associated with each of the containers, the processor linked to and controlling the indicia provider.

38. The apparatus of claim 38 further including a labeler for providing a label for each of the containers, the indicia provider including a printer for printing the indicia on the labels.

39. The apparatus of claim 39 wherein the labeler applies the labels to the containers.

42. An apparatus for use with a container configuring system, the configuring system configuring containers at least a sub-set of which include enhanced devices for indicating data related to orders associated with the containers, the apparatus for providing an indication useable by the configuring system to provide properly configured containers, the apparatus comprising:

an input device for receiving an enhanced device indication and a recipient identification wherein the indication indicates that the associated recipient uses an interactive system that can read enhanced devices;

a database for storing an enhanced device user list indicating recipients that use enhanced devices;

an interface for specifying an order including at least a recipient identifier;

a processor linked to the database and receiving orders from the interface, determining if a recipient corresponding to the recipient identifier is included in the enhanced device user list and, when a recipient is included in the enhanced device user list, indicating an enhanced device user to the configuring system.

43. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein, when the processor receives an order the processor stores the order in a database queue.

44. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein, when the processor determines that a recipient is an enhanced device user, the processor indicates the enhanced device user in the order prior to storing the order and then, during configuration, the processor provides the indication to the configuring system.

45. The apparatus of claim 43 wherein, the processor determines if a user is an enhanced device user during the configuration process.

46. An indicator for use with containers and a container configuration system wherein the configuration system is capable of providing at least a sub-set of containers that include enhanced memory devices where data related to an order associated with a container is provided on the enhanced device, the indicator comprising:

a descriptor including:

a first segment including human readable indicia related to the product to be stored in the container; and

a second machine-readable segment useable to determine if an enhanced device including data should be provided on the container.

47. The indicator of claim 47 wherein the indicator is one of a label and a part of the container on which the indicator is included.

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53. A method for use with a medication prescription system wherein at least a subset of medications are stored in enhanced containers each of which include an enhanced device for storing data related to medications to be stored in the containers, the stored data useable by interactive devices that may obtain and use information from the enhanced devices to perform at least one health safety function, at least one sponsor sponsoring enhanced devices for storing at least one of the medications, the method for indicating container types as a function of sponsorship criteria, the method comprising the steps of:

providing sponsorship criteria indicating conditions under which the sponsor agrees to sponsor the at least one medication;

receiving a prescription including prescription information for a user for the at least one medication;

comparing circumstantial information including at least the prescription information to the sponsorship criteria;

if the circumstantial information satisfies the sponsorship criteria, indicating that a container including an enhanced device should be used to store the medication; and

else, indicating that a container that does not include an enhanced device should be used to store the medication.

54. The method of claim 53 wherein the means for providing sponsorship criteria includes providing a list of sponsored medications.

55. The method of claim 56 wherein the step of providing sponsorship criteria further includes the step of, for each sponsored medication in the list, providing a sponsored medication profile indicating, in addition to medication type, at least one other criteria required for sponsorship.

56. The method of claim 57 wherein the at least one other criteria includes simultaneous consumption of a medication in addition to the medication specified in the prescription.

57. The method of claim 57 wherein the at least one other criteria includes at least one of a medical condition and habit of the medication user for which the prescription was rendered, the method further including the step of indicating the at least one of the medical condition and habit of the user.

58. The method of claim 56 wherein there are a plurality of different possible health safety functions that may be sponsored and the sponsor may sponsor only a subset of the possible functions and wherein the step of providing sponsored medication profiles includes the step of, for each profile, providing an indication of which functions are sponsored.

59. The method of claim 60 wherein the step of providing an indication of each sponsored function includes providing a pulse sequencing program to be stored on the enhanced device for performing at least part of each sponsored function.

60. The method of claim 61 further including the step of, when an enhanced container is indicated, providing an enhanced device and loading the sequencing program into the enhanced device.

61. The method of claim 62 further including the step of loading other prescription information into the enhanced device.

62. The method of claim 62 further including the step of printing at least a subset of the prescription information on the container in human readable indicia.

63. The method of claim 60 wherein sponsorship duration may be limited and wherein the step of providing medication profiles further includes the step of, for each profile, providing an indication of sponsorship duration.

64. The method of claim 65 wherein the step of providing sponsored medication profiles further includes the step of, for each profile, indicating the sponsor.

65. The method of claim 66 wherein the step of indicating the sponsor further includes the step of providing information that can be used to bill the sponsor.

66. The method of claim 55 wherein the step of providing sponsorship criteria further includes the step of providing an indication of the sponsor and billing information related to the sponsor and wherein the method further includes the step of, when an enhanced device is indicated, generating a bill for the sponsor.

67. The method of claim 68 wherein the step of providing billing information includes providing a network address for the sponsor and wherein the step of generating a bill further includes the step of transmitting billing information to the sponsor.

68. The method of claim 55 wherein the step of providing sponsorship criteria includes indicating that at least two medications will be sponsored when criteria are met and providing a separate profile for each of the two medications, each profile associated with the criteria.

69. The method of claim 55 wherein the step of providing sponsorship criteria includes indicating at least first and second prescribed medications, the method further includes the step of providing a user characteristics profile indicating all medications prescribed for the medication user and wherein the circumstantial information further includes the characteristics profile.

70. The method of claim 71 wherein the characteristics profile further includes a list of medication user conditions.

71. A method for configuring an indicating configuration to be associated with a container wherein each indicating configuration includes an indicator and data stored thereon related to an order associated with the container and at least a sub-set of indicating configurations include an enhanced memory device and enhanced data stored thereon, an enhanced device being a device that cooperates with a data collector to gather information therefrom, at least one descriptor associated with each order that can be used to identify the indicating configuration and the data to be stored via the indicating configuration, the method comprising:

- reading each descriptor;
- receiving each descriptor and using the descriptor to identify when enhanced data is associated with an order;
- when enhanced data is associated with an order, writing enhanced data to an enhanced device; and
- when enhanced data is not associated with an order, causing another indicating function to be performed.

72. The method of claim 73 further for use with a database correlating descriptors with associated data to be written to enhanced devices, when a descriptor is received, identifying by accessing the database and determining if enhanced data corresponds to the specific descriptor.

73. The method of claim 74 wherein each container is a medication container, each order is a medication prescription for a particular medication user and the data is data related to the medication to be stored in the container.

74. The method of claim 75 wherein the data is also a function of a medication user corresponding to the order.

75. The method of claim 74 wherein the system includes a writer to write data to enhanced devices, at least a sub-set of the descriptors indicate that no data should be written to an enhanced device and wherein the another function includes disabling the writer when no data is to be written to an enhanced device.

76. The method of claim 74 further including the steps of providing a container source controlled by the processor and providing containers having enhanced devices attached thereto.

77. The method of claim 78 wherein the system includes a writer to write data to enhanced devices, at least a sub-set of the descriptors indicate that no data should be written to an enhanced device and wherein the another function includes disabling the writer when no data is to be written to an enhanced device.

78. The method of claim 78 wherein the container source includes an enhanced container source and a non-enhanced container source for providing enhanced and non-enhanced containers, respectively, and wherein, when a descriptor indicates that no data is to be written to an enhanced device, the another function includes causing the non-enhanced source to provide a non-enhanced container.

79. The method of claim 80 wherein the enhanced container source includes an enhanced device source and a device attacher, the attacher receiving non-enhanced containers and, when an enhanced container is required, attaching an enhanced device to a container to provide the enhanced container.

80. The method of claim 81 further including the step of using the descriptor to identify human readable indicia related to the order and printing the indicia for inclusion on the container.

81. The method of claim 82 further including providing a label source for providing labels and wherein the step of printing includes printing indicia on the label.

82. The method of claim 73 further including the steps of providing a label source for providing labels having enhanced devices attached thereto for inclusion on the containers.

83. The method of claim 84 wherein the step of providing a label source includes providing an enhanced label source and a non-enhanced label source for providing enhanced labels including enhanced devices and non-enhanced labels, respectively, and wherein, when a descriptor indicates that no data is to be written to an enhanced device, the method includes the step of causing the non-enhanced source to provide a non-enhanced label.

84. The method of claim 85 further including the steps of using the descriptor to identify human readable indicia related to the product to be stored in the container and providing the indicia on the label.

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85. The method of claim 73 further including the steps of using the descriptor to identify human readable indicia to be included on the container wherein the indicia is related to the order, providing a label and for printing the indicia and sequencing the indicia printing and data writing such that indicia and data corresponding to the same descriptor are provided on the same container.

86. The method of claim 87 wherein each label includes an indicia surface and an attached enhanced device and wherein the printing and writing steps include printing and writing the indicia and data corresponding to a single descriptor to the surface and device, respectively, at the same time.

87. The method of claim 87 wherein each of the writing and printing steps is a specifying step and each of the indicia and data are specifying information, a first of the specifying steps occurs before a second of the specifying steps, each printing and writing cycle is a specifying cycle, for each descriptor, the first step occurs N specifying cycles prior to the second step and the processor sequences the second step specifying information to be specified N cycles after the first step specifying information is specified.

88. The method of claim 89 wherein N is 1.

89. The method of claim 73 further including the step of providing a container source wherein the source provides containers with attached descriptors.

90. The method of claim 91 further for use with a system including a database that correlates each descriptor with associated data to be written to enhanced devices, when a descriptor is received, the identifying step including identifying by accessing the database and locating the descriptor and associated data.

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Abstract

92. A method for providing medication containers at least a sub-set of which include enhanced devices wherein each enhanced device includes data related to an order associated with the container, the method comprising the steps of:

- 5 providing an enhanced container source providing containers including attached enhanced devices;
- providing a non-enhanced container source;
- determining when an enhanced container should be used to store the product;
- and
- 10 when an enhanced container should be used:
- providing the enhanced container for storage; and
- writing the data to the enhanced device.

93. The method of claim 94 also for providing human readable indicia on the containers, each indicia including data related to the product to be stored in the container, the method further including providing indicia to be associated with each of the containers.

94. The method of claim 95 further including printing the indicia on labels to be applied to the containers.

95. The method of claim 96 further including applying the labels to the containers.

96. The method of claim 97 wherein the indicia includes a descriptor that can be used to identify the data to be written to the enhanced device, the method also including the steps of, after a label is applied to a container and the indicia is printed on the label, reading the descriptor and using the descriptor to identify the

5 data to be written to the enhanced device.

97. A method for use with a container configuring system, the configuring system configuring containers at least a sub-set of which include enhanced devices for indicating data related to orders associated with the containers, the method for providing an indication useable by the configuring system to provide properly
5 configured containers, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an enhanced device indication and a recipient identification wherein the indication indicates that the associated recipient uses an interactive system that can read enhanced devices;

10 storing an enhanced device user list indicating recipients that use enhanced devices;

specifying an order including at least a recipient identifier; and

determining if a recipient corresponding to the recipient identifier is included in the enhanced device user list and, when a recipient is included in the enhanced device user list, indicating an enhanced device user to the configuring system.

98. An method for identifying container types for storing product, the method comprising the steps of:

specifying product information about the product to be stored in the container, the product information including label information to be provided on the container exterior, the label information requiring a specific surface area on the container exterior;

determining, based at least in part on the required surface area, the container type; and

indicating the type of container to be used to store the product.

99. The method of claim 100 wherein the label information includes warnings to be provided on the container exterior, each warning requires a specific surface area on the container exterior, the total surface area required for the warnings on the container exterior is a required area and the step of identifying the container type includes identifying at least in part based on the required area.

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100. An apparatus for use with a medication prescription system wherein at least a subset of medications are stored in enhanced containers each of which include an enhanced device for storing data related to medications to be stored in the containers, the stored data useable by interactive devices that may obtain and use information from the enhanced devices to perform at least one health safety function, at least one sponsor sponsoring enhanced devices for storing at least one of the medications, the apparatus for indicating container types as a function of sponsorship criteria, the apparatus comprising:

a sponsored medication profile database indicating conditions under which the sponsor agrees to sponsor the at least one medication;

an input device for receiving a prescription including prescription information for a user for the at least one medication; and

a processor performing a pulse sequencing program to perform the steps of: receiving the prescription information and comparing circumstantial information including the prescription information to the sponsorship medication profiles;

if the circumstantial information satisfies the sponsorship criteria, indicating that a container including an enhanced device should be used to store the medication; and

else, indicating that a container that does not include an enhanced device should be used to store the medication.

101. The apparatus of claim 103 wherein the sponsorship medication profile database includes a list of sponsored medications.

102. The apparatus of claim 104 wherein the sponsorship medication profile database further includes, for each medication in the list, a sponsored medication profile indicating, in addition to medication type, at least one other criteria required for sponsorship.

103. The apparatus of claim 105 wherein the at least one other criteria includes simultaneous consumption of a medication in addition to the medication specified in the prescription.

104. The apparatus of claim 105 wherein the at least one other criteria includes at least one of a medical condition and habit of the medication user for which the prescription was rendered.

105. The apparatus of claim 104 wherein there are a plurality of different possible health safety functions that may be sponsored and the sponsor may sponsor only a subset of the possible functions and wherein the medication profiles include each include an indication of which functions are sponsored.

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106. An apparatus for providing container labels at least a sub-set of which include enhanced devices wherein each enhanced device includes data related to an order associated with the container, the apparatus comprising:

an enhanced label source providing labels including attached enhanced
5 devices;

a non-enhanced label source;

a processor equipped to control the sources, the processor determining when an enhanced label should be used to identify the prescription and, when a non-enhanced label should be used, providing the non-enhanced label and when an
10 enhanced label should be used providing the enhanced label and providing at least a subset of the data related to the order; and

a writer for receiving the enhanced labels and writing the data related to the order to the enhanced devices.

107. The apparatus of claim 109 further including a printer linked to the processor for receiving both enhanced and non-enhanced labels, for each label, the processor providing at least a subset of the data related to the order to the printer for printing on a label.

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108. An apparatus for use with a container, a data collector and an enhanced device, when the collector is juxtaposed in a specific orientation with respect to the enhanced device, the collector able to receive data stored on the enhanced device, the container and collector having first and second mechanical constraints that cooperate to position the collector adjacent an aligned section of the container, the apparatus for securing the enhanced device adjacent the aligned section, the apparatus comprising:

a device attacher positioned adjacent an attachment station, the attacher for attaching an enhanced device to a container section positioned within an attachment location within the station;

an enhanced device source providing enhanced devices to the attacher; and

a container positioner for receiving the container and positioning the container at the attachment station such that the aligned section is within the attachment location;

wherein, with the aligned section within the attachment location, the attacher attaches the enhanced device to the aligned section.

109. The apparatus of claim 111 wherein the positioner includes a third mechanical constraint receivable by the first mechanical constraint to control the position of the container.

110. The apparatus of claim 112 wherein the container is a vial and the first mechanical constraint includes at least one extension from the side of the container and the third mechanical constraint includes a keyed extension that abuts the at least one extension.

111. The apparatus of claim 111 wherein the container includes a vial and a vial cap and wherein the collector is formed within the cap.

112. An apparatus for use with a medication prescription system wherein at least a subset of medications are stored in enhanced containers each of which include an enhanced device for storing data related to medications to be stored in the containers, the stored data useable by interactive devices that may obtain and use information from the enhanced devices to perform at least one health safety function, at least one sponsor sponsoring enhanced devices for storing at least one of the medications, the apparatus for indicating container types as a function of sponsorship criteria, the apparatus comprising:

means for providing sponsorship criteria indicating conditions under which the sponsor agrees to sponsor the at least one medication;

means for receiving a prescription including prescription information for a user for the at least one medication;

means for comparing circumstantial information including at least the prescription information to the sponsorship criteria;

if the circumstantial information satisfies the sponsorship criteria, means for indicating that a container including an enhanced device should be used to store the medication; and

else, means for indicating that a container that does not include an enhanced device should be used to store the medication.

113. The apparatus of claim 115 wherein the means for providing sponsorship criteria includes means for providing a list of sponsored medications.

114. The apparatus of claim 116 wherein the means for providing sponsorship criteria further includes means for, for each sponsored medication in the list, providing a sponsored medication profile indicating, in addition to medication type, at least one other criteria required for sponsorship.

115. The apparatus of claim 117 wherein the at least one other criteria includes simultaneous consumption of a medication in addition to the medication specified in the prescription.

116. The apparatus of claim 117 wherein the at least one other criteria includes at least one of a medical condition and habit of the medication user for which the prescription was rendered, the apparatus further including the means for indicating the at least one of the medical condition and habit of the user.

117. The apparatus of claim 116 wherein there are a plurality of different possible health safety functions that may be sponsored and the sponsor may sponsor only a subset of the possible functions and wherein the means for providing sponsored medication profiles includes the means for, for each profile, providing an indication of which functions are sponsored.

118. The apparatus of claim 120 wherein the means for providing an indication of each sponsored function includes means for providing a pulse sequencing program to be stored on the enhanced device for performing at least part of each sponsored function.

119. The apparatus of claim 121 further including means for, when an enhanced container is indicated, providing an enhanced device and loading the sequencing program into the enhanced device.

120. The apparatus of claim 122 further including means for loading other prescription information into the enhanced device.

121. The apparatus of claim 122 further including means for printing at least a subset of the prescription information on the container in human readable indicia.

122. The apparatus of claim 120 wherein sponsorship duration may be limited and wherein the means for providing medication profiles further includes means for, for each profile, providing an indication of sponsorship duration.

123. The apparatus of claim 125 wherein the means for providing sponsored medication profiles further includes means for, for each profile, indicating the sponsor.

124. The apparatus of claim 126 wherein the means for indicating the sponsor further includes means for providing information that can be used to bill the sponsor.

125. The apparatus of claim 125 wherein the means for providing sponsorship criteria further includes means for providing an indication of the sponsor and billing information related to the sponsor and wherein the apparatus further includes means for, when an enhanced device is indicated, generating a bill for the sponsor.

126. The apparatus of claim 128 wherein the means for providing billing information includes means for providing a network address for the sponsor and wherein the means for generating a bill further includes means for transmitting billing information to the sponsor.

127. The apparatus of claim 115 wherein the means for providing sponsorship criteria includes means for indicating that at least two medications will be sponsored when criteria are met and means for providing a separate profile for each of the two medications, each profile associated with the criteria.

128. The apparatus of claim 115 wherein the means for providing sponsorship criteria includes means for indicating at least first and second prescribed medications, the apparatus further includes means for providing a user characteristics profile indicating all medications prescribed for the medication user and wherein the circumstantial information further includes the characteristics profile.

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130. An apparatus for configuring an indicating configuration to be associated with a container wherein each indicating configuration includes an indicator and data stored thereon related to an order associated with the container and at least a sub-set of indicating configurations include an enhanced memory device and enhanced data stored thereon, an enhanced device being a device that cooperates with a data collector to gather information therefrom, at least one descriptor associated with each order that can be used to identify the indicating configuration and the data to be stored via the indicating configuration, the apparatus comprising:

means for reading each descriptor;

means for receiving each descriptor and using the descriptor to identify when enhanced data is associated with an order;

means for, when enhanced data is associated with an order, writing enhanced data to an enhanced device; and

means for, when enhanced data is not associated with an order, causing another indicating function to be performed.

131. The apparatus of claim 133 further for use with a database correlating descriptors with associated data to be written to enhanced devices, when a descriptor is received, the means for identifying by accessing the database and determining if enhanced data corresponds to the specific descriptor.

132. The apparatus of claim 134 wherein each container is a medication container, each order is a medication prescription for a particular medication user and the data is related to the medication to be stored in the container.

133. The apparatus of claim 135 wherein the data is also a function of a medication user corresponding to the order.

134. The apparatus of claim 134 wherein the system includes means for writing data to enhanced devices, at least a sub-set of the descriptors indicate that no data should be written to an enhanced device and wherein the another function

includes means for disabling the means for writing when no data is to be written to an enhanced device.

135. The apparatus of claim 134 further including means for providing a container source controlled by the processor and means for providing containers having enhanced devices attached thereto.

136. The apparatus of claim 138 wherein the system includes means for writing data to enhanced devices, at least a sub-set of the descriptors indicate that no data should be written to an enhanced device and wherein the another function includes means for disabling the means for writing when no data is to be written to an enhanced device.

137. The apparatus of claim 138 wherein the means for providing a container source includes a means for providing an enhanced container source and a means for providing a non-enhanced container source for providing enhanced and non-enhanced containers, respectively; and wherein, when a descriptor indicates that no data is to be written to an enhanced device, the another function includes means for causing the non-enhanced source to provide a non-enhanced container.

138. The apparatus of claim 140 wherein the means for providing an enhanced container source includes a means for providing an enhanced device source and a means for attaching a device, the means for attaching receiving non-enhanced containers and, when an enhanced container is required, attaching an enhanced device to a container to provide the enhanced container.

139. The apparatus of claim 141 further including means for using the descriptor to identify human readable indicia related to the order and means for printing the indicia for inclusion on the container.

140. The apparatus of claim 142 further including means for providing labels and wherein the means for printing includes means for printing indicia on labels.

141. The apparatus of claim 133 further including means for providing labels having enhanced devices attached thereto for inclusion on the containers.

142. The apparatus of claim 144 wherein the means for providing a label source includes means for providing an enhanced label source and a means for providing a non-enhanced label source for providing enhanced labels including enhanced devices and non-enhanced labels, respectively, and wherein, when a descriptor indicates that no data is to be written to an enhanced device, the apparatus includes a means for causing the non-enhanced source to provide a non-enhanced label.

143. The apparatus of claim 145 further including means for using the descriptor to identify human readable indicia related to the product to be stored in the container and means for providing the indicia on the label.

144. The apparatus of claim 133 further including means for using the descriptor to identify human readable indicia to be included on the container wherein the indicia is related to the order, means for providing a label and for means for printing the indicia and means for sequencing the indicia printing and data writing such that indicia and data corresponding to the same descriptor are provided on the same container.

145. The apparatus of claim 147 wherein each label includes an indicia surface and an attached enhanced device and wherein the means for printing and means for writing include means for printing and means for writing the indicia and data corresponding to a single descriptor to the surface and device, respectively, at the same time.

146. The apparatus of claim 147 wherein each of the means for writing and printing is a specifying means and each of the indicia and data are specifying information, a first of the specifying means operates before a second of the specifying means, each printing and writing cycle is a specifying cycle, for each

151. An apparatus for providing medication containers at least a sub-set of which include enhanced devices wherein each enhanced device includes data related to an order associated with the container, the apparatus comprising:

means for providing an enhanced container source providing containers

5 including attached enhanced devices;

means for providing a non-enhanced container source;

means for determining when an enhanced container should be used to store the product; and

means for when an enhanced container should be used:

10 means for providing the enhanced container for storage; and

means for writing the data to the enhanced device.

152. The apparatus of claim 154 also for providing human readable indicia on the containers, each indicia including data related to the product to be stored in the container, the apparatus further including means for providing indicia to be associated with each of the containers.

153. The apparatus of claim 155 further including means for printing the indicia on labels to be applied to the containers.

154. The apparatus of claim 156 further including means for applying the labels to the containers.

155. The apparatus of claim 157 wherein the indicia includes a descriptor that can be used to identify the data to be written to the enhanced device, the apparatus also including means for, after a label is applied to a container and the indicia is printed on the label, reading the descriptor and means for using the
5 descriptor to identify the data to be written to the enhanced device.

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156. An apparatus for use with a container configuring system, the configuring system configuring containers at least a sub-set of which include enhanced devices for indicating data related to orders associated with the containers, the apparatus for providing an indication useable by the configuring system to provide properly configured containers, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving an enhanced device indication and a recipient identification wherein the indication indicates that the associated recipient uses an interactive system that can read enhanced devices;

means for storing an enhanced device user list indicating recipients that use enhanced devices;

means for specifying an order including at least a recipient identifier; and

means for determining if a recipient corresponding to the recipient identifier is included in the enhanced device user list and, when a recipient is included in the enhanced device user list, indicating an enhanced device user to the configuring system.

